

Evaluation Brief: ICPE Uganda

Uganda has achieved high growth and poverty reduction in recent years, however it still faces a number of development challenges if it is to reach its goal of achieving upper-middle-income status by 2040. Key development challenges include the uneven distribution of development gains across social groups and regions, gender inequality in politics and the economy, governance gaps and low citizen participation, corruption, regional insecurity, degradation of natural resources and youth unemployment.

The national poverty rate was 21.4 percent in 2016, however there are marked regional disparities, with poverty reaching 35.7 percent in the north and 32.5 percent in the east. An estimated 57 percent of the population – over 23.5 million Ugandans – live in multidimensional poverty. The 2012 disarmament brought a fragile peace to the region, ending the extended conflict between the government and pastoral Karamojong groups, and inter-group disputes. In recent years instability in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo has disrupted trade, and has resulted in an influx of over 1 million refugees since mid-2016. Uganda has

earned international recognition for its progressive refugee policies. This Independent Country Programme Evaluation covers the development work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Uganda from 2016 to 2020.

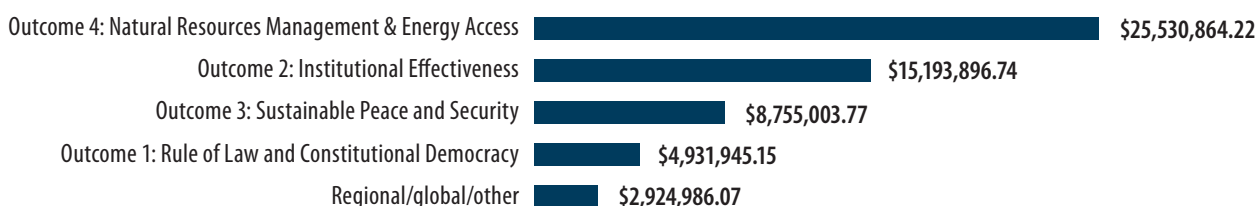
UNDP Uganda continues to work closely with the government. The design of the country programme document, its outcomes and flagship programmes further illustrate a commitment to ensuring strong alignment with the government’s own plans, including the Uganda Second National Development Plan 2015/2016-2019/2020. However, its implementation relies on five underfunded flagship programmes, which has constrained the office’s work and limited the level of depth in a number of areas.

UNDP Uganda’s continued high reliance on TRAC (core) funding is unsustainable. The office has had partial success in leveraging TRAC funds and attracting a broad base of additional donor or government funding, most recently in resilience and environment. The office has not sufficiently engaged with the broader donor community or been able to fully communicate and garner interest in a number of its work areas, activities and programmes.

Funding sources, 2016-2019



Programme expenditure by outcome, 2016–2019



There is a lack of clarity in UNDP Uganda's results-based management and theory of change, which form the basis for programmatic support, as well as the overall programme approach and monitoring to inform management decisions. This has limited the development of synergies, learning and adaptive management.

UNDP's environmental portfolio under the sustainable and inclusive economic development pillar has built on the organization's comparative strengths in institutional capacity building. UNDP has successfully supported the implementation of a range of environmental and natural resource activities in partnership with the Ugandan Government. These have delivered a mix of upstream and downstream contributions that are strongly aligned to national priorities and commitments, as well as UNDP's own strategic priorities.

UNDP's work in inclusive and effective governance has built on considerable past work, experience, and partnerships in the governance sector in Uganda. The restructuring of the programme portfolio, and the development of the inclusive and effective governance pillar and its three flagship programmes has helped bring alignment and focus to the portfolio in some cases (rule of law and peace and resilience) but has mostly struggled in other areas (institutional effectiveness).

Outside of the two pillars and five flagship programmes, UNDP has been able to develop an additional portfolio of activities including support to government planning, Sustainable Development Goal integration and supporting resilience in response to refugee issues in Uganda.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: While future programme and project development should continue to be closely aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the Uganda Third National Development Plan, sub-programme approaches to meet outcome goals should be more strategically focused, with realistic funding channels to enable the realization of outcomes and outputs. Equally, UNDP should retain the option of operating outside of the alignment with the government and support emerging areas of need outside of those identified in multi-year government development planning.

Recommendation 2: Results frameworks, monitoring systems and approaches should be designed to support decision making and learning, and not only for corporate reporting purposes. Programme and project data collection need to be linked to ensure that attribution and contribution is clearly supported by evidence.

Recommendation 3: While the current country programme document was the first attempt by UNDP Uganda to cluster its inclusive and effective governance-related activities under a limited number of programmes, the coming country programme document should take the next steps towards transforming these programmes so that they are more visionary in their outlook and strategic in their contribution to the development process in Uganda.

Recommendation 4: Within the Institutional Effectiveness Programme, the evaluation recommends a more structural revision of the programme with a greater focus on strengthening local governance.

Recommendation 5: UNDP should develop a separate Sustainable Development Goal programme and support the drafting of the Uganda Third National Development Plan. UNDP should offer the government a clearly

outlined portfolio of support to strengthen the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendation 6: The next phase of the sustainable and inclusive economic development strategy should focus on implementation, working downstream with local communities and districts. UNDP should adopt a coherent strategy in terms of achieving environmental impacts and setting targets in relation to natural resource management, energy production and consumption, and biodiversity conservation.

Recommendation 7: UNDP should adjust its theory of change to further mainstream gender in the programme, specifically focusing its efforts towards addressing structural barriers and root causes of gender inequalities in the country.